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*Turn your worn-out party dress
Into a popular fashion*

Hem Yourself a Harem

by Marcena Christian
Home Economics Sophomore

HAREM HEMLINES REMAIN in the spotlight for spring dress-up. These puffy, bouffant skirts are flattering, feminine, and very fashionable. This style is particularly suited to the shorter skirt length that remains in the fashion picture on the college

campus. The harem skirt is adapted to a wide variety of the fabrics used for formal dresses—from the polished cottons to the filmy chiffons. Plan now to include at least one harem-skirted party dress in your spring wardrobe.

You can transform an old formal or bouffant skirt into a fashionable style with the harem hem for little or no cost. The steps are simple and easy to follow, but will vary slightly depending on the type of fabric, the construction of the garment and the width of the original hemline. These pictures illustrate one method of adding the harem hemline and, at the same time, changing the skirt length.

The basic principle of the harem skirt is that of a fuller and longer overskirt or outer layer being gathered at the hemline to a shorter, less full foundation. This creates the puffy effect.



If the skirt you are transforming has a lining or an underskirt, this foundation is already provided. For those skirts without this foundation, one can be added. Select a material that will blend with the fabric type and weight of the dress. Non-woven interfacings, nylon net, organdy and taffeta are a few fabrics suited to this purpose. Cut the foundation from twenty to thirty-six inches less full than the outer layer. Run a basting stitch five-eighth inch from the upper edge, and place a second row of gathering one-eighth inch below this. Gather; evenly space these gathers around the waistline of the skirt. Attach by machine- or hand-stitching the foundation to the waistline seam of the dress.



Determine the desired completed length of the dress, and measure to make sure that it is even. Measure the width of the hem allowance. For the best results the hem must be a minimum of three inches. Deeper hems are more desirable. Measure and trim the foundation to the length of the desired finished dress length minus the number of inches that the hem of the outer layer will be. For instance, if the hem of the dress is three inches wide, the foundation will be three inches shorter than the dress hemline. Run a gathering thread along the edge of the skirt — about one-fourth inch from the edge. Gather; adjust these gathers to fit the lower edge of the foundation. Stitch in place. Raw edges may be finished with bias seam tape.

Model: Barbara Tokheim

By following a few suggestions along with this basic procedure, more professional-looking harem hemlines can be achieved. By adding a layer of net beneath sheer, soft fabrics, the skirt will have more "poof." A quick, temporary harem effect can be achieved by attaching at the hemline of the skirt a crinoline petticoat that is a few inches shorter than the skirt of the dress.

Be fashionable and at the same time be economical. Convert a plain bouffant skirt into the exciting, gay fashion with the harem hemline. Try it this season.

